

# O D E

ON THE

DEATH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

BY

S. G. W. BENJAMIN.

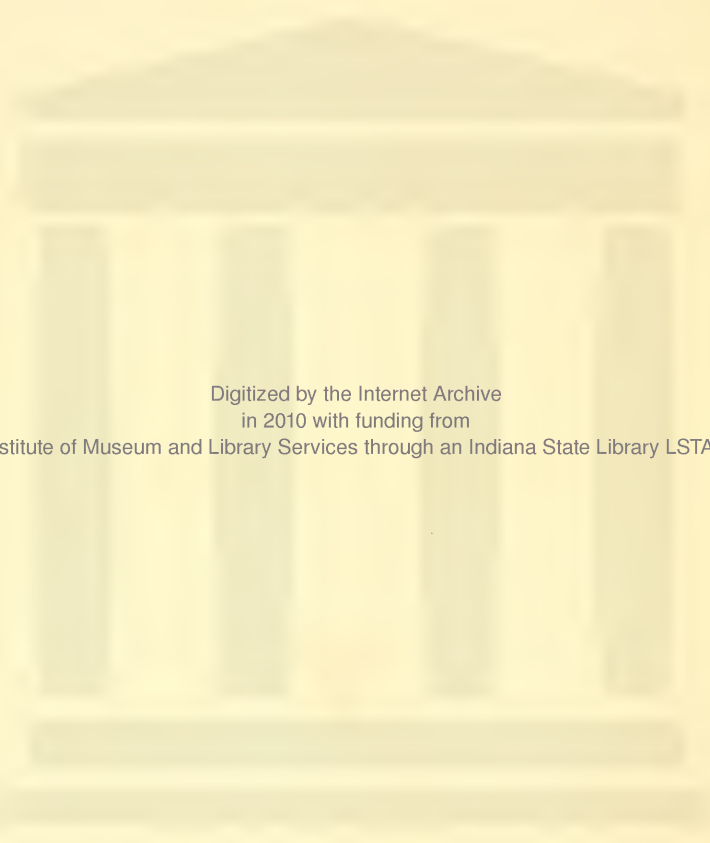


BOSTON:  
WILLIAM V. SPENCER,  
134, WASHINGTON STREET.  
1865.



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The first draught of these lines appeared in the "New-York Independent." As they may respond, in a slight degree, to the popular sentiment at this time, a few copies have been issued in the present form, with some changes and additions.



“ With a noble nature and great gifts  
Was he endowed, — courage, discretion, wit,  
An equal temper and an ample soul,  
Rock-bound and fortified against assaults  
Of transitory passion, but below  
Built on a surging subterranean fire  
That stirred and lifted him to high attempts.  
Wherefore with honor lay him in his grave.”

PHILIP VAN ARTAVELDE.



## O D E.

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### I.

**L**ET the nation weep,  
As they bear the martyr  
To his last, long sleep !

### II.

Ay, let the nation weep !  
Another such as he  
We never more shall see  
This side eternity.

### III.

Ay, let the nation weep !  
And let the slow bells toll  
For the noblest soul

That ever dwelt in man,  
 Or ever led the van  
 Of Freedom's hosts to victory,  
 And rang the charge of Liberty !

## IV.

Well may the nation weep,  
 And shudder at the stroke  
 That all their slumbering wrath awoke.  
 O wretch accurst, whose impious hand could dare  
 To smite the leader of the people's choice,  
 Or seek to harm a single hair  
 Of him whose heart, whose hand, whose voice,  
 Were all employed to work the people's good,  
 And stop the flow of fratricidal blood !  
 And O, ye modern Pharaohs, ye whose gold  
 Was gathered by the souls ye bred and bought and  
     sold, —  
 Ye, that, heedless of the warning signs of God,

Sought to bring again the Iron age,  
 To imbrute the human body, and to cage  
 The soaring spirit of mankind !  
 Your hearts were stone, your eyes were blind,  
 And ye defied  
 The Almighty in your pride !  
 We ask no more, — we know that God is just ;  
 Only let not the sword of Justice rust ;  
 We ask no more, — the bolt that hurled  
 Our country's saviour to the dust  
 Made you a mockery and a byword to the world !

## V.

And him, the good, the great,  
 Crowned by a martyr's fate,  
 What words can fitly utter forth  
 His manly virtues and his worth ?  
 Perchance he did not seem  
 So great to those who deem

A traitor or a Nero  
May be a glorious hero,  
If he but wear a classic face,  
Or ape the superficial grace  
That marks the scion of a titled race.  
Not such was he for whom we mourn ;  
Of gentle blood he was not born,  
Nor heir to patrimonial lands  
Tilled by the bondman's unrequited hands.  
He inherited a heart,  
As an infant's, void of art ;  
Yet imbued with a Titanic might,  
In his hate of wrong, his love of right :  
His was the celestial beauty  
Of a soul that does its duty.  
Noble patriot, husband, father,  
He did not seek to gather  
The laurels of a wild ambition,  
That only yield a vain fruition.  
To benefit mankind, — this was his aim ;

To labor and to live unstained with blame :

He died without a blot upon his name.

Let a requiem sublime

Ascend from every clime !

Let the weary and oppressed,

From north and south, from east and west,

For whom his great heart yearned,

For whom his spirit burned,

To give their sufferings rest, —

Let all arise with lamentation,

And, with his own beloved nation,

Bequeath the fame

Of LINCOLN'S name —

A heritage for veneration —

To the remotest generation !

## VI.

Ay, let the nation weep,

While the slow bells toll,

And the cannon roll,  
For the funeral knoll  
Of his mighty soul !  
Ye cannot break the slumber deep  
That wraps his limbs in quiet sleep ;  
He cannot hear  
The crowds that tread  
Around his bier,  
Nor see the tears they shed ;  
For he nevermore shall dwell  
With the people that he loved so well.  
Let the nation's sorrow have its way  
For him who was the nation's stay !

## VII.

Our hearts are sad, our eyes are dim ;  
We hoped long years of rest for him,  
To enjoy the peace for which he wrought, —  
The peace with his own life-blood bought.

But he has rest  
Among the blest,  
And with the Christ he loved.  
Enough ! his work was done ;  
The victor's crown was won ;  
And God himself removed  
The patriot-martyr to his home.  
Enough ! his task was done ;  
For us remains to guard his tomb,  
To bid the willow wave  
Around the sacred grave  
Of him who loosed the slave,  
And weave the fame  
Of LINCOLN's name  
With WASHINGTON's renown, —  
Twin stars of glory,  
Unfading in our nation's story.

## VIII.

*His* work is done ;

*Our* work is scarce begun :

'Tis ours to keep the nation that was saved

By his untiring zeal and earnest toil,

And by the valor of the hosts that braved

The cannon's shot, and sleep beneath the soil ;

'Tis ours to plant the school, to teach the rising  
youth

Of every hue, in every hamlet of the South ;

To instruct and elevate the public mind,

And show the last-discovered problem to mankind,

That Reason's sway outlives the tyrant's power,

That Liberty gives strength, and might makes right  
no more.

No longer let the demagogue with bribes,

With brazen face and lying diatribes,

Juggle votes from every facile fool

Whose unlettered brain becomes the tool  
For schemes of avarice and misrule.  
Let loftier motives than the love of self,  
The greed for gold, for place, for power and pelf,  
Direct the people to their truest gain.  
Hasten the years when all who vote can read,  
When all refuse their ignorance to plead,  
And hate of evil is the universal creed.  
So shall we honor best the hallowed graves  
Upon a hundred fields of battle, where the waves  
Of treason dashed against our ship of state,  
Dashed with crimson foam, but dashed in vain ;  
So shall we heed the warning voice of him  
Whose name, unsullied by the hand of Fate,  
Shall be a household word in every clime  
When kings are obsolete, when diadems grow dim,  
And empires, palsy-stricken, plunge adown the  
abyss of time.

IX.

Let his monument arise,  
 Pointing upward to the skies,  
 Founded by a nation's heart,  
 Grandly shaped in every part  
 By the master-minds of art,  
 And consecrated by a nation's tears,  
 To teach throughout the after-time,  
 To every tribe, in every clime,  
 That toil for others is sublime.  
 Immortal Patriot ! through the mist of years  
 That in the future are to come, —  
 When we who saw thee here are gone, —  
 We view thy heaven-aspiring tomb  
 Illumined by the roseate dawn  
 Of the millennial day,  
 When Peace shall hold her sway,  
 And bring Saturnian eras ; when the roar

O' the battle's thunder shall be heard no more ;  
When Liberty and Truth shall reign for evermore,  
From Oregon to Florida's perpetual May,  
From Shasta's awful peak to Massachusetts Bay, —  
Then our children's children, by the cottage door,  
In the schoolroom, from the pulpit, at the bar,  
Shall look up to thee as to a beacon star,  
And deduce the lesson from thy life and death,  
That the patriot's lofty courage and the Christian's  
    faith  
Conquer honors that outweigh Ambition's gaudiest  
    prize,  
Triumph o'er the grave, and open the gates of Para-  
    dise.











